

## **Environmental Resource Committee**

**November 16, 2016**

### **Minutes**

ERC Members present: Richard Hilderman, Jan Harris, Neil Gilbert, Gary Merritt

Officials present: Mayor Robert Forrester, Councilman Mark Benton, Councilman Rich Cerrato, Councilman Pete Larkin, Councilman John Corbett

Public: Greg Jensen, Ann Jensen, Karen Joseph, Ruth Reynolds, Carmel Zetts, John Mabry

1. Richard Hilderman called the meeting to order and asked new ERC Member, Gary Meritt to introduce himself to the Committee and audience.
2. No Public Comments
3. Gary Merritt introduced himself and gave a brief statement about his interests as a member of the ERC Committee.
4. Minutes from Nov. 2, 2016 and October 26, 2016 Meetings approved.  
Jan Harris asked a question as to why the Critique of the ERC Power point Presentation by the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, Western Carolina University had not been placed on the town's website as the ERC requested two meetings ago.

Neil Gilbert asked why this ERC meeting was not noticed on the town email sites. Pete Larkin, Councilman, responded that because the ERC is a Committee and not a board, an email notice is not required. The notice had already been posted on the town website about the dates of the ERC meetings for 2016 and 2017. Only that one notice is required. Gilbert was concerned because this meeting was not advertised on the email list as he had told an interested citizen that the way to be notified of the ERC meetings was to sign up on the Town website for the Towns email notification list. He did not see that citizen in the audience at this meeting.

5. Review of Moffatt & Nichol (M&N) Community Briefing Nov. 12, 2016 Questions and Answers. Hilderman asked each committee member for their overview of the M&N Nov. 12, 2016 Presentation. All Committee

members agreed that the M&N Presentation fell short in answering the questions presented by the ERC.

Pete Larkin, Councilmember, gave an in depth explanation as to why M&N Presentation answered the questions to his satisfaction. Mr. Larkin stated the ERC is looking at the glass as half empty.

Jan Harris responded that she felt that her town wanted to do the right thing with this project. She felt it was her responsibility on this committee to alert the town to potential problems presently and possibly in the future and that was her responsibility to the town and its citizens.

The Committee reviewed each of the questions from M&N Presentation. John Corbett, Councilman, stated that the town had rules that applied to its waterways behind the island. The M&N Presentation states that enforcement may be necessary. Everyone agreed that enforcement is not a viable solution.

John Corbett disagreed that the proposed project creates additional usage of Jinks Creek. Jan Harris pointed out that the M&N document states there will be additional usage of Jinks Creek. She also pointed that “expanded use” is prohibited by the CAMA Rules. Gary Merritt pointed out that the Committee’s concerns also address future impacts of this project.

John Mabry, a member of the public, attempted to explain how bulkhead blowout can be a result of the dredging and should be considered. John Corbett, Councilman, explained that those concerns were addressed by M&N.

John Corbett, Councilman, stated regarding the Nov. 12 Community briefing meeting that he was frustrated with M&N’s lack of addressing the environmental impacts of this project, especially on PNA, SAV, and shellfish. Also frustrating to Corbett was the costs of the project were not addressed adequately.

6. Review of Eastern Channel, Oak Island, NC. Jan Harris presented information on this project that was also one of M&N’s projects. The project was called a Habitat Restoration Project. The habitat area was ocean front where ocean front erosion was drastically threatening ocean

front homes. The sand from this project was used to place in the eroded areas of Oak Island ocean front homes. The sand would be obtained by dredging Eastern Channel and connecting it to the inlet. The down drift beach is Oak Island. The habitat restored would be the ocean front habitat and habitat area for nesting sea turtles. Jan Harris stated she could see no similarity in the Oak Island project and the Sunset Beach project as stated in the FAQ sheet.

7. Review of Mason Inlet (next to Shell Island condos). Richard Hilderman gave an overview of this project which also was a project to protect endangered properties from erosion. This project moved Mason Inlet farther north and established a maintained channel farther from the Shell Island Condo Complex. This property was paid for by the Shell Island area property owners. It is maintenance dredged every three years. In 2016 a project began to dredge the Intracoastal Waterway where it had shoaled due to the Shell Island project. New Hanover County and Shell Island property owners are sharing the cost of this dredging. Not the ACOE. There is no similarity between the Shell Island project and the Sunset Beach project.
8. Procedure to get ERC recommendations and suggestions to Council. Richard Hilderman posed this question. Mayor Forrester responded that the best way would be in the form of a report. The committee put the preparation of a report to go to Council on its next meeting agenda. Hilderman asked each committee member to bring an issue or concern to the next meeting. Mayor Forrester also told the Committee that he would get an answer regarding the Power Point Critique.
9. Agenda items for next meeting were to discuss the ERC recommendation report to the Council and to create and elect a Corresponding Secretary for the ERC.
10. The public had made their comments during the meeting.
11. Meeting adjourned.